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ABSTRACT

Changes in the field of teaching English as a second language (TESL), especially in the last two decades, have included increased recognition of the language needs of learners in numerous circumstances and have resulted in greater attention to the problems of language minority groups in the United States. TESL today is strong and growing, has achieved professional status, and has expanded in teaching, teacher training, and research. Three current areas of TESL of potential interest to teachers of speech are programs for bilingual children, for children in immigrant groups, and for minority children who speak a nonstandard dialect such as Black English. Basic resources for TESL teachers include a wide array of professional groups, professional publications, commercial texts and materials, and other aids. The recent stress on communicative competence has led to increased collaboration between ESL and speech or language arts teachers and has had an impact on TESL curriculum design, practical exercises, and testing programs. (GT)

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COMMUNICATION EDUCATION AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Stephen Cooper

Teaching English as a second language is a significant endeavor in the world. At home, despite the fact that "the height of immigration has long since passed, a large proportion of Americans still have a native language that is other than English. According to the 1970 census, 33.2 million Americans, or roughly 16 percent of the population, speak a language other than English as a native tongue."[1] Realizing that one in six Americans does not speak English as his first language, that speakers of Black English have important language needs, and that recent immigration influxes have demanded new efforts, we can understand why the field of teaching English as a second language (TESL) has developed such a broad and large responsibility.

TESL includes several related areas, such as teaching English as a foreign language, teaching English as a second dialect, and teaching English in bilingual education.[2] The terms for these sub areas vary to reflect programs aimed at different learner needs and goals. In this paper TESL is used as the general heading for such interrelated enterprises.

TESL's role in American education has a brief and recent history. Before World War II such teaching was usually done on an ad hoc basis in the United States to provide for the needs of immigrants. Classes were offered by civic associations, YMCAs, and a few schools and colleges. In 1939 the University of Michigan established its English

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Language Institute, where linguists such as Charles Fries and Kenneth Pike developed classes in English for Spanish speakers, especially college bound students.[3] Subsequently other colleges developed similar programs. At the same time American educators were increasingly drawn into TESL abroad and by the 1960s millions of people throughout the world were learning English as a second language, many of them through projects developed by agencies of the United States government.[4]

In the 1950s and '60s several academic organizations had begun interest groups related to TESL. For example, the Speech Association of America had its Speech for Foreign and Bilingual Students Interest Group. Leaders in those professional associations saw the need for a separate organization, and the new group, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, held its first convention in 1967. The TESOL association now has about 7500 members, regular publications and meetings, and an international outlook.

In the last two decades TESL professional have turned their efforts toward the problem of language minority groups in the United States, especially Blacks and Chicanos. The field has expanded from its chief interest in college students and adult immigrants so that today one of the most important TESL areas is for "native-born Americans," whose first language or dialect is not English, and of these "most are school children or young adults."[5]

That speech teachers played a major role in the birth and development of this new academic area should not be surprising. Both communication education and TESL are concerned with language learning and

what linguists call "communicative competence." In the following sections I wish to discuss the relationship of these two areas, mostly by describing the field of TESL in ways which should continue to attract support from teachers of speech. I would like to give a general outline of the field, draw attention to three specific movements, discuss resources for teachers, and show how those of us in communication can continue to influence TESL.

TESL Today

Teaching English as a second language is at an all time high throughout the world and in the United States. The world wide status of English as the language of commerce and industry has created a demand for teaching English in virtually every quarter and to every age group. In the United States three factors have significantly increased TESL activity: crash immigration influxes, minority needs, and the bilingual education movement.[6] The results of this proliferation of ESL teaching include the development of a self image among people working in TESL as a separate profession, new academic organizations, the development of certification standards, new teacher training programs, accelerated government support for schools, a deluge of commercially prepared teaching materials, innovations in curricula and methods, and enlarged research in second language acquisition. An example of this heightened development can be found in TESL teacher training where twenty years ago only a handful of universities offered degrees in the field, usually through departments of linguistics.

Currently one can find over a hundred separate degree and certificate programs in the United States, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, many of which exist under specific departments of English as a second language.[7]

A contemporary glance at TESL would be incomplete without reference to some of the issues, research trends, and needs of the field. Methodological questions continue to infuse TESL journals and conventions with exploration and debate. For instance, just as the transformational-generative grammar movement has disrupted traditional practices in teaching English to native speakers, so has it impacted second language teaching. Another area of controversy deals with differences between first and second language learning strategies.[8]

Research in TESL enjoys a breadth similar to that of communication education. In addition to pedagogy, work goes on in psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, neurolinguistics, and applied linguistics.[9] Theory building continues in importance, especially as more and more empirical studies are being carried out.[10] However, graduate research in TESL programs remains largely focussed on curriculum design, methods, materials, and teaching techniques.

Most of the field's current needs in the areas of manpower, research, and funding are being attacked in so many ways and so rapidly that it is difficult to assess major problems facing TESL. A highly important issue in the United States is the role of ESL in bilingual education in our schools and educating the public for acceptance of multicultural

education. Along these lines, according to Muriel Saville-Troike, "There is an urgent need to formulate a new set of goals, methods, and concepts for ESL instruction if it is to remain viable and make potential contributions to American Education."[11]

In summary, TESL today is strong and growing. Spurred by demands here and abroad, the field has achieved a professional status and has expanded in teaching, teacher training, and research. In the next section I explore three current areas of TESL which may be of interest to teachers of speech.

Some Current Teaching Areas

Educational movements and events in the last twenty years have brought to the forefront the language needs of several minority groups and programs to remedy them. Discovering the problems and their solutions has required the resources of teachers from various disciplines, especially those concerned with language development. Three areas I wish to mention are bilingual programs, immigration influences, and other minority needs.

The trend toward bilingualism in the United States is quite new. Although the Bilingual Education Act of 1968 provided important direction for states with large numbers of non-English speaking children, it was not until a Supreme Court decision (Lau v. Nichols, 1974) and related directives from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare made it clear that our schools were obligated to provide bilingual and bicultural curricula for children.[12] An important part of such programs must, of

course, be teachers who are trained in helping children learn to communicate orally. As various communities build bilingual programs they will continue to seek assistance from the field of communication education for curriculum design and for teaching.[13]

While the school systems of large cities like New York have often attempted to meet the language needs of immigrants, the tendency for immigrant groups to cluster in those cities and the recent massive influxes from Cuba and Southeast Asia, especially, have created new and urgent demands on the schools. Because bilingual programs cannot be established overnight and because of the sheer magnitude of the need in some communities ESL programs have been and are still needed. Further, in the numerous places where such programs are impossible to devise, as in small towns, the requirements of even small numbers of immigrant children and adults should be served. Often the already overloaded therapist or special education teacher assumes responsibility, on an ad hoc basis or with "pull out" classes. Speech and language arts teachers can support even the most impromptu efforts through evaluation, teaching, and supplying materials and ideas for others.[14]

The third currently important area of ESL in the United States is the teaching of English as a second dialect, or bidialectalism. Communication educators have contributed much interest and effort toward meeting the needs of speakers of Black English. Teachers are concerned not only with equipping some students with another dialect but with attitude development. As one TESL specialist put it, "We are firmly

committed, then, to the attitude which linguists take that all dialects are useful for communication. If it were otherwise, they would cease to exist. Pupils who come to school speaking a dialect other than the standard should not be made to feel inferior in any way. Schools should consistently impress on all students the validity of varieties of speech. These attitudes of acceptance should be one of the primary targets for teaching."[15] Because of their sensitivities to language development and social communication needs, speech teachers are in a unique position to continue playing a supportive role in this domain.[16]

ESL Resources for the Speech Communication Teacher

In this section I wish to introduce teachers of speech communication to basic resources for TESL, including professional associations, publications, and materials.

Many individual and groups of countries have organizations devoted to TESL, but these are too numerous to list. However, the international group, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL, 455 Nevils Building, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C. 20057), has affiliates in America and overseas. The annual meetings, regular publications, placement service, and other activities of TESOL make it an invaluable resource. TESOL conventions and publications stress workshops and practical matters for classroom teachers but respect research as well. The special interest groups reveal the breadth of TESOL's interests: Teaching English Abroad, EFL for Foreign Students in English Speaking Countries, ESL for U.S. Residents in General, ESL

in Bilingual Education, ESL in Adult Education, Standard English as a Second Dialect, and Applied Linguistics.

Although several professional groups in the United States support TESL activities, two merit specific mention. The National Association for Foreign Student Affairs (NAFSA) has national and regional meetings, publications, and a strong interest group, The Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL), which support efforts, especially at the college level. Second, the National Association of Bilingual Educators (NABE) has begun to provide services for teachers in bilingual programs. In addition, over twenty states have TESL-bilingual education organizations to assist teachers at the local level.

Numerous resources in print provide the field with information on methodology, materials, and research. Perhaps two of the most important journals in the United States are the TESOL Quarterly (TESOL association) and Language Learning (University of Michigan), but several others, such as the NABE Journal, are valuable. The United States Information Service publishes the English Teaching Forum for teachers outside of the United States, and many of the foreign TESL organizations produce useful periodicals. Contemporary and helpful works on methodology abound.

Finding teaching materials for all kinds of programs and at all levels has become fairly simple because of recent activity by commercial publishers. Among those in the United States with strong ESL lines are the Institute of Modern Languages, English Language Services, The University of Michigan Press, Harper and Row, Coller Macmillan, American

Book, Newbury House, Prentice-Hall, Regents, McGraw-Hill, and the University of Pittsburgh.

Of supporting government sources one of the most prolific is the ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, at the Center for Applied Linguistics (1611 North Kent Street, Arlington, Virginia 22209). ERIC/CLL publishes numerous contemporary materials on ESL and bilingual education at little or no cost.

In summary, the teacher of speech who wants or needs resources for TESL will find an array of professional groups, practical publications, commercial texts and materials, and other aids which contribute to a variety of endeavors in the field.

Communicative Competence

A new wave of thinking in TESL makes developing the relationship of communication education and TESL highly attractive from both theoretical and practical standpoints. The movement is one which elevates the linguistic idea of "communicative competence" to such an extent that impact on TESL is already visible. Put simply, communicative competence means the ability of language students to use the second language in real communication situations. ESL teachers "now tend to think that it is more important for the learner to communicate his ideas than to practice utterances with perfect pronunciation. The one thing that everyone is absolutely certain about is the necessity to use language for communicative purposes in the classroom."[17] Because teachers of speech subscribe to the same philosophy for first language development, and have so for

a long time, they can contribute to TESL methodology, curriculum design, activity planning, and evaluation.

A recent argument for this kind of collaboration asserts that, "A comprehensive, systematic and necessary change in ESL methodology will occur only when. . .first language principles are articulated and incorporated into an up-to-date ESL method."[18] The author goes on to compare what happens in classes taught by "language arts specialists" with classes taught by ESL instructors and finds the former by far richer for developing communication skills because of the theoretical approach in communication education which stresses the functional use of language and because of the resulting teaching practices.[19] In sum, the ESL teacher must now learn from the speech or language arts teacher both theoretical and methodological insights to develop communicative competence.

Curriculum design provides another area of entry. In TESL attention is shifting to practical language use through "functional" or "notional" plans. According to Mackay, the traditional ESL syllabus is "designed by starting with the question 'What grammatical forms do we want to cover in the syllabus/lesson/unit?' The focus is on the formal syntactic features which are to be included. The notional approach starts by asking, 'What do we want the learner to be able to communicate by means of the language?'"[20]

Next, the ESL teacher needs practical exercises. According to Savignon, "Most important to the learner's progress in developing

communicative competence is a variety of activities in which the student can use the second language in unrehearsed, novel situations requiring, on his part, inventiveness, resourcefulness, and a good bit of aplomb."[21] Who better than the speech teacher can suggest such activities?

A final change in the teaching of ESL brought on by the communication emphasis is in the area of testing. ESL teachers must learn to evaluate language development in new ways, and by monitoring student ability to use the second language in realistic or actual situations.[22] Once again, communication education can provide models for such measurement.

Conclusion

Dramatic changes in the field of teaching English as a second language, especially in the last two decades, have included increased recognition of the challenging language needs of learners in numerous circumstances. TESL has shifted its attention from international students in college preparatory programs. According to Norris, "Native-born Americans make up an immensely larger group in need of [ESL], and yet their special needs have been all too often ignored or, where recognized, have been met with inadequate, inappropriate, and even self-defeating teaching strategies."[23] Because the majority of these second language learners are children, and because of social concern for all language minorities in the country, new efforts in ESL, in bilingual education, and in teaching English as a second dialect have demanded the resources of all fields concerned with language acquisition. Consultants,

teachers, materials, curricula, and activities must often be found locally, where needs exist and where funds for outside professional support may prove inadequate. This is especially the situation where school boards are underfunded and where the number of language minority students is perceived too small to warrant new programs. In any case, teachers of speech can assist in a variety of ways, from evaluation to curriculum planning.

For the newcomer to TESL recent professional organizations, publications, training programs, and other resources make work in this field possible.

Finally, because of the move in TESL toward an emphasis on developing communication skills, communication education can offer support in the development of theory and practice, thus building joint efforts for the solution of a significant educational problem.

[1]A Better Chance to Learn: Bilingual Bicultural Education, United States Commission on Civil Rights Clearinghouse Publication No. 51 (Washington: U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 1975), p. 10. The 1980 census may reveal even more about language minorities in the United States; see Robert Reinhold, "Census Questions on Race Assailed As Political by Population Experts," New York Times, May 14, 1978, pp. 1, 14.

[2]Betty Wallace Robinett, "The Domains of TESOL," TESOL Quarterly, 6 (Sept. 1972), 197-207.

[3]Steven G. Darian, English as a Foreign Language: History, Development, and Methods of Teaching (Norman, Oklahoma: U. Oklahoma Press, 1972), chapter 3.

[4]Albert H. Marckwardt, "English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language," in Harold B. Allen, ed., Teaching English as a Second Language (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), pp. 3-4.

[5]William E. Norris, TESOL at the Beginning of the '70s: Trends, Topics, and Research Needs (Pittsburgh: University Center for International Studies and the Department of General Linguistics, 1971), p. 8.

[6]Christina B. Paulston, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1975: A Dipstick Paper, CAL-ERIC/CLL Series on Languages and Linguistics, Number 39 (Washington: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, and Arlington, Virginia: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 1976), p. 4. Paulston notes another impetus, adult education, and rightly attributes the major growth factors to recent American social concerns.

[7]See Charles H. Blatchford, ed., Directory of Teacher Preparation Programs in TESOL and Bilingual Education, 1976-78 (Washington: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 1977).

[8]For an excellent treatment of part of this controversy and a proposed remedy, see Gloria Paulik Sampson, "A Real Challenge to ESL Methodology," TESOL Quarterly, 11 (Sept. 1977), 241-255.

[9]Norris, pp. 36-40, presents broad suggestions for such research.

[10]Paulston, pp. 8-9.

[11]Foundations for Teaching English as a Second Language: Theory and Method for Multicultural Education (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976), p. vi.

[12]A Better Chance to Learn: Bilingual Bicultural Education. pp. 19-21.

[13]On the relationship of TESL and bilingual education, see tha "Position Paper on the Role of English as a Second Language in Bilingual Education" in Blatchford, pp. 123-126.

[14]As Norris, p. 28, has pointed out, ESL programs are needed in schools at all levels, K-12.

[15]Robinett, p. 201; also see Saville-Troike, p. 29.

[16]Other language minorities have captured the interest of communication educators. For example, the 1964 convention program of the Speech Association of America lists a panel of papers on the "The Speech Communication Training of American Indians" (p. 45), which parallels another concern in TESL. See Norris, p. 9.

[17]Paulston, p. 11.

[18]Sampson, p. 243.

[19]Sampson, pp. 245-254.

[20]Ronald Mackay, "Functional/Notional Syllabuses," SPEAQ Journal, 1 (Fall 1977), 85.

[21]Sandra J. Savignon, "Teaching for Communication," English Teaching Forum, 16 (April 1978), 3.

[22]Sandra J. Savignon, "Communicative Competence: Theory and Classroom Practice," SPEAQ Journal, 1 (Fall 1977), 5-7.

[23]Norris, p. 8.